

GUNSIGHT PASS

by WILLIAM MACLEOD RAINE

Continued from Our Last Issue.

The door of the inner room opened. Dug Doble's big frame filled the entrance. The eyes of the two gunmen searched each other. Steelman sidled over to the desk. His right hand dropped into an open drawer, apparently carelessly and without intent.

"You fired Bear Canon," charged the cowpuncher.

Doble's eyes narrowed. "You aim to run my business, Shorty?"

From the desk came the sharp angry bark of a revolver. Shorty felt his hat lift as a bullet tore through the rim. His eyes swept to Steelman, who had been a negligible factor in his calculations. The man fired again and blew out the light. In the darkness Shorty swept out both guns and fired. His first two shots were directed toward the man behind the desk, the next two at the spot where Doble had been standing. Another gun was booming in the room, perhaps two. Yellow fire flashed from the blackness.

Shorty whipped open the door at his back, slid through it, and kicked it shut with his foot as he leaped from the porch. At the same moment he thought he heard a groan.

Swiftly he ran to the cottonwood where he had left his horse tied. He jerked loose the knot, swung to the saddle, and galloped out of town.

Dug Doble's first thought was for his own safety. Satisfied that all was well, he turned to the figure sprawled on the floor with outflung arms.

"Dead as a stuck hog," he said cautiously after he had turned the body over. "Got him plumb through the forehead—in the dark, too. Some shootin', Shorty."

He could put a finger on the time he had commenced to go wrong. It had been when he had quarreled with Emerson Crawford about his daughter Joyce. He had gone more definitely wrong after Sanders came back to Malapi. The young ex-convict, he chose to think, was responsible for the circumstances that made him an outlaw. Crawford and Sanders together had exposed him and

driven him from the haunts of men to the hills. He hated them both with a bitter, ungodly virulence his soul could not escape.

Revenge! The thought of it spurred him every waking hour, roweling his wounded pride cruelly. There was a way within reach of his hand, one suggested by Steelman's whisperings. He could make the girl love him.

CHAPTER XXIII

Dave knew no rest that night. He patrolled his line from San Jacinto to Cattle and back again, stopping always to lend a hand where the attack was most furious. The demon had swept away by an air current. To the fire-fighters that glimpse of the landscape told an appalling fact. The demon had escaped below from San Jacinto Canon and been swept westward by a blast of wind with the speed of an express train. They were trapped by the back-fire in a labyrinth from which there appeared no escape. Every path of exit was blocked. The flames had leaped from hilltop to hilltop.

Dave spoke quietly. "We've got a chance if we keep our heads. There's an old mining tunnel hereabouts. Follow me, and stay to gether."

The tunnel was a shallow one in a hillside. Dave stood aside and counted the men as they passed in. Their place of refuge was packed with smoke. A tree crashed down at the mouth and presently a second one. These, blazing, sent more heat in to cook the tortured men inside. In that bakehouse of hell men showed again their nature, cursing, praying, storming, or weeping as they lay.

The prospect hole became a madhouse. A big Hungarian, crazed by the torment he was enduring, leaped to his feet and made for the blazing hill outside.

"Back there!" Dave shouted hoarsely.

The big fellow rushed him. His leader flung him back against the rock wall. He rushed again, screaming in crazed anger. Sanders struck

him down with the long barrel of the forty-five. The Hungarian lay where he fell for a few minutes, then crawled back from the mouth of the pit.

Fire-crashed and exhausted, he dropped down at last into forgetfulness of pain. And the flames, which had fought with such savage fury to blot out the little group of men, fell back sullenly in defeat.

The line of fire had passed over them. In the fresh air the men revived quickly. They went back into the cavern and dragged out those of their companions not yet able to help themselves. Three out of the twenty-nine would never help themselves again. They had perished in the tunnel.

CHAPTER XXIV

The women of Malapi responded generously to the call Joyce made upon them to back their men in the fight against the fire in the chaparral. Now they cooked and baked cheerfully to supply the wants of the fire-fighters.

Into the relief headquarters, Keith raced ahead of a messenger.

"Joy, Joy, a man wants to see you!" From Dave! he shouted.

"A letter, senorita," the man said, presenting her with a note which he took from his pocket.

The note read:

MISS JOYCE:

Your father has been hurt in the fire. This man will take you to him.

—DAVE SANDERS.

Joyce went white to the lips and

caught at the table to steady herself. "Is—is he badly hurt?" she asked.

The man took refuge in ignorance, as Mexicans do when they do not want to talk.

Soon they were on the road, Keith riding behind his sister and clinging to her waist.

For an hour they jogged along the dusty road which led to the new oil field, then swung to the right into the low foothills.

"Is he here?" asked Joyce breathlessly.

The man pointed to a one-room shack huddled on the hillside.

Keith had fallen sound asleep, his head against the girl's back. "Don't wake him when you lift him down," she told the man. "I'll just let him sleep if he will."

Joyce ran toward the shack. There was no light in it, no sign of life about the place. She could not understand this.

Her heart lost a beat. The shadow of some horrible thing was creeping over her life. Was her father dead? What shock was awaiting her in the cabin?

"Father," she whispered, and moved forward.

A hand fell on her wrist and closed, the fingers like bands of iron. Joyce screamed wildly, her nerve swept away in a reaction of terror.

She fought like a wildcat, twisting and writhing with all her supple strength to break the grip on her arm.

For she knew now what the evil

was that had been tolling a bell of warning in her heart.

CHAPTER XXV

The change in the wind had cost three lives but it had saved the Jackpot property and the feed on the range.

For several minutes the creaking of a wagon working up an improvised road had been heard. Now it moved into sight. The teamster called to Crawford.

"Here's another load of grub, boss. Miss Joyce she rustled up them can-

teens you was askin' for."

Crawford stepped over to the wagon. "Don't reckon we'll need the grub fine. The fire's about out."

"That's bully. Say, I got news for you, Mr. Crawford. Brad Steelman's dead. They found him in his house, shot plumb through the head."

"Who killed him?"

"Some folks was guessin' that mebbe Dug Doble could tell."

A question brought his mind back to the present. The teamster was talking: "... so she started pronto. I s'pose you wasn't as bad hurt as Sanders figured."

"What's that?" asked Crawford.

"I was sayin' Miss Joyce she started right away when the note come from Sanders."

"What note?"

"The one tellin' how you was hurt in the fire."

Crawford turned. "Come here, Dave," he called hoarsely.

Sanders moved across.

"Hank says you sent a note to

Joyce sayin' I'd been hurt. What about it?"

"Course not!" answered Dave. Perplexed.

The teamster scratched his head. "I was there when she left. About twelve o'clock last night, mebbe later. She was on that sorrel of hers, an' Keith was ridin' behind her. Two young folks an' Juan."

"Juan?"

"Juan Otero. He brought the note an' rode back with her."

The old cattleman felt a clutch of fear at his heart. Juan Otero was one of Dug Doble's men.

In the haggard, unshaven face of the cattleman Dave read the ghastly fear of his own soul. Doble was capable of terrible evil. His hatred, jealousy, and passion would work together to poison his mind. The corners of his brain had always been full of just and obscenity.

"Question is, where did he take her," said Crawford. "We might comb the hills a week and not find his hole. I wish to God Shorty was still here. He might know."

"He's our best bet, Bob," agreed Dave. "Find him. He's gone off somewhere to sleep. Rode away less than half an hour since."

"I'll gather a posse to rake the hills Dave. If that villain hurts my girl or Keith—"

"Crawford's whisper broke. He turned away to conceal the working of his face.

Continued in Our Next Issue.

The modern silk hat was first worn in England about 1840.

Rich Colorings of Batik Popular for The Spring Costume

BY REDDA HOYT.

NEW YORK, Feb. 9.—Among the materials and fabrics which are being shown for the smart spring costumes we find the gorgeous "batik."

Few of us know, perhaps, the meaning of batik. And yet that the use of colored paints and wax, has been the dream work of dozens of American artists. No press or machinery can create designs of such exquisite colorings and shadings of colors.

Batik had its origin on the island of Java, where native artists discovered the beauty of hand painted designs on white linen cloth. American artists saw the possibility of utilizing this art on crepe de chenes, velvets and chiffons and found amazing results.

With the introduction of this art in America, we saw negligees like spun gold reflecting brilliant Autumn tones; blues fading into lavenders and into deeper tones that are as nameless as the colorings of a desert sunset. The batik artist strives to sell his work by personal order rather than by the wholesale route. He feels that he must work something

of the personality of the wearer into the gown. Each person suggests to him a different blending of color and certainly colors can express moods, personalities. Gray, for instance, suggests tranquility, simplicity; lavender, quaintness; rose, cheerfulness; black, poise; etc. Today every lovely woman has in fact a blending of all these qualities. Thus the artist's logic of the costume of batik.

For a brunette, what could be more exotic than a gown beginning at the neck line with a pale yellow fading imperceptibly into gold, then into dull orange which ends at the hem in a deep, ruddy brown, the whole gown crackled by means of wax to simulate the fabrics of ancient origin and having an indistinct design throughout?

Several wholesale blouse and gown houses now employ their own batik artists. Most of these are more timid in their use of colorings than the artist whose sole aim is to satisfy his soul rather than his appetite. Those of us who feel this same timidity in the usage of batiks for street wear will surely satisfy our desire for them in the sanctity of our boudoirs.

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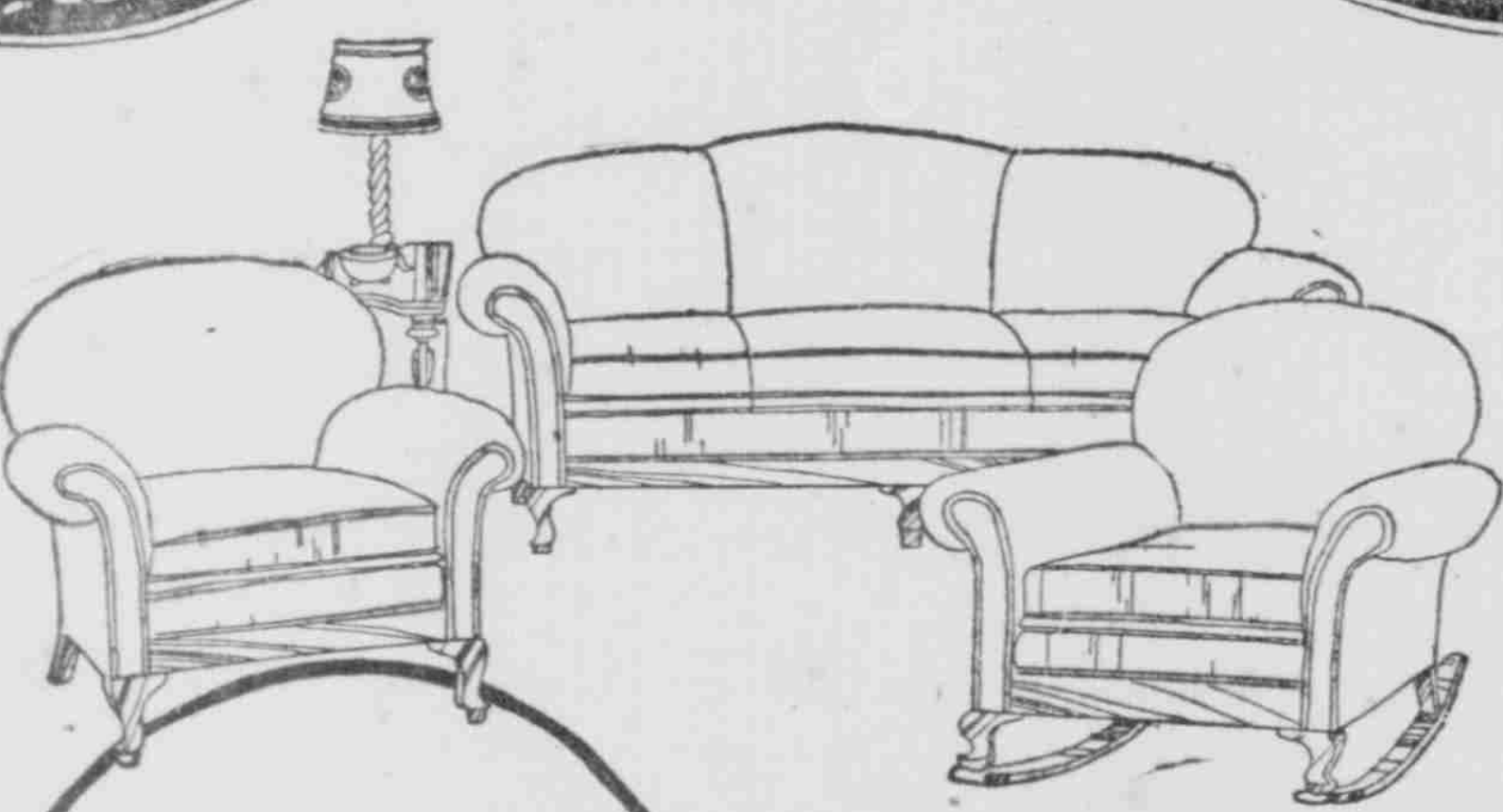
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New Shipments of Spring Apparel are Arriving Daily

The Frances Shop The Frances Shop

FIRE SALE!

Friends and patrons of the M. B. Wholesale Store will be pleased to learn that adjustments have been made on all stock damaged in the fire, which occurred recently, at the store on South Michigan street. Preparations are being made for the Fire Sale which will be announced in Monday's papers.

Needless to say that long as the damaged merchandise — (overcoats, suits, pants, hats, caps, underwear, shoes, gloves, shirts, etc.,) — lasts there'll be many unusual bargains — and no doubt thousands will be on hand the first Sale Day to get first pick of these Bargains. See Monday's papers for further particulars and Sale advertisement.

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